

LABOUR

ORGANISER

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WELL DONE, WELLS D.L.P. !**

SITUATIONS VACANT

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* * *

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* * *

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THAT'S THE SPIRIT

Our Party's individual membership is now 645,345, the highest it has ever been. In two years we have almost doubled our membership—an astonishing advance. The target set by the N.E.C. of a million individual members by the end of the year, is well within our grasp.

But skill, persistence and a “divine impatience” (to quote Clem Jones's words in his article this month) will be needed to attract this additional 355,000 members.

It is a general experience that the most difficult part of a membership campaign is to make a start. Once the new members start rolling in, it is often amazing what a spirit of joyous self-confidence and virility is engendered. That is the spirit which is pervading such parties as Wells and Luton, East Lewisham and Woolwich, and a fair number of others to-day.

Take the case of the Wells party, for instance. It did not start with any initial advantages. Indeed, it lacked and still lacks the stimulus and practical assistance of having a Labour M.P. The division itself is scattered, has no big centres, and has never been regarded as particularly favourable to Labour Party organisation.

Yet, despite these handicaps, it has enrolled a higher proportion of the Labour voters as individual members than any other D.L.P. in Britain—approximately one in four. The national target in this respect is very much more modest, namely, one in every twelve Labour voters.

If every party in the country enrolled 1,700 members, our target of 1,000,000 would be achieved. Surely it can be done. There's no magic about the success of Wells and Luton and the other high-membership parties. They have no super-men, no organising geniuses at work. But their members are imbued with an all-conquering faith in the way of life we call Socialism. That's the spirit which can and will carry us to the 1,000,000 membership figure and to new avenues of service and fellowship for our movement.

The Story of Wells D.L.P.

By CLEM JONES, Organiser, South-West

At the end of 1944 the Wells Divisional Labour Party comprised three Local Labour Parties with a total membership of 283. In 1945, Cyril Morgan, the Labour Candidate, polled 10,539 votes. At the end of 1946 the Party had 2,536 members, organised in over a dozen well-found Local Parties. That is to say, they had recruited into membership practically a quarter of their voting strength.

My friends in the Wells Division are waiting to find out from the Annual Report how many Parties in the country have done better. What Miss Dartle wants to know is, why have so many Parties not done half so well?

The Wells Division covers nearly 400 square miles of land, mostly green. It has no great towns nor great factories, but it contains pleasant and comfortable places like Wells, Glastonbury, Street, Shepton Mallet, Bruton, Castle Cary, Wincanton, Milborne Port without any docks, Templecombe, and many sunny villages where life generally passes serenely.

Buoyant and Proud

This constituency is not, on the face of it, the answer to a Labour Agent's prayer.

Yet, when people (and now the Editor, confound him) ask me how it's done, a congenital preference for truth forbids me to dramatize.

No superman, no organising genius, has been at work. No hitherto-unknown methods of attracting men and women to the Party have been discovered. There has not even been a single spectacular high - pressure Divisional Membership Drive.

The explanation of this Party's fine achievement is, I believe, psychological. They came out of the General Election buoyant and proud and have remained so. There is virility and confidence and a divine impatience in the air in their Divisional meetings.

A dozen cars and coaches bring from fifty to sixty delegates, who deal with their business as eagerly as they acquit

themselves at the tea-party provided by a bevy of smiling ladies. If their officers lacked drive (they do not) the deficiency would be supplied from the floor.

A Busy Party

It is a busy Party, and therefore a happy one. Divisionally and Locally, something is always going on, and enterprise on the part of Local Party Committees wins its reward in the support of the members.

A glance at the last printed report of the Local Parties (in the monthly Divisional "Labour Leader") reveals records of Whist Drives, Discussion Groups, Dances, Public Meetings, a Bring-and-Buy Sale, a Dinner, a Children's Party complete with Punch and Judy Show, formation of an Educational Sub-Committee, and much else.

These young and vigorous Parties are not operating in Labour strongholds. A great deal of their work yet to do is pioneering work, but they are learning their electioneering in the local field, and they now hold 38 seats on the various Local Government bodies in the constituency.

Truth Squads

Divisionally, they have a way of taking time by the forelock. On the first mention of "truth squads" they demanded truth squads for their Division, disregarding the regular truth squads they were having in the form of frequent visits from Cyril Morgan, re-selected soon after the General Election, and a succession of M.P.s.

They clamoured to know all about P.E.O.s. They have called a Press Conference to explore means of strengthening their publicity.

In short, they have reached their present creditable position because they are energetic, confident, proud of the Labour Government, proud of themselves, and determined to keep the lead in the South Western Membership League Table. And at the risk of making them vain the District Organiser admits he is proud of them!

Dick Montford Passes

By R. STANTON, General Secretary, National Union of Labour Organisers and Election Agents

THE Union has lost one of its most devoted members by the death last month of Dick Montford, at the age of 89.

To the end he was in active harness as Finance and Contribution Secretary of the London District, and I am told by those near to him, harbouring a strong hope that he would yet be able to attend, first, the Annual Meeting of the London District, where he was going to present his "best ever" Financial Report, and secondly the Annual Conference of the Union at Margate.

Alas, it was not to be. His passing will leave a great gap in the London District in particular and the Union in general.

For he was not just a mere colleague or District Official.

His Gift of Friendship

I WELL remember my entry into the Union for the first time in 1929, and the welcome which Dick, then London District Secretary, gave to me. He established himself at once as a friend, and so continued throughout the years it has been my great privilege to associate with him in the Union's work.

He seemed to have a happy knack of sensing those periods of personal agitation and worry which come to all Agents, and offering words of encouragement, and perhaps offering practical assistance, which again made one feel that after all our work was worth while and worth going ahead with. So we faced with a new vigour and determination those horrible problems which earlier had seemed to spell the end of our political work.

He was never despondent and could always find the silver lining.

We mourn the passing of a great character. We shall miss his genial presence and encouraging counsel. But for all time we shall have his memory. Always those who were associated with him will regard with great pride and joy the friendship they enjoyed with him.

All Districts will have had meetings in preparation for the Annual Union Conference.

I had the good fortune to be able to attend the London District meeting,

which happened also to be its Annual Meeting. As innovation was made by inviting a guest speaker to attend the lunch, which it has now become traditional to hold prior to the business meeting.

The Inspiration of Harold Croft

THE District chose as its first guest Harold Croft, and what an excellent choice it proved to be. One has often felt that Harold was not being utilised by the movement to the best advantage and certainly his speech at the lunch was confirmation of the fact.

It hardly seems adequate to say his speech was "inspiring."

It was a revelation of the power of simplicity and respect for human personality. It contained a message which needs to be understood by all who have any responsibility in the Labour movement, from the most humble to the most high. When Harold first expounded his inspired "Victory for Socialism" campaign, I felt he should be sent out to the movement to take his message to every Labour Party that he was physically capable of reaching.

I hope Harold—when he does in fact retire from the four walls of office work in the Party—will find it possible to revisit many gatherings of Party members to let them have the benefit of his exposition of our Socialist faith as it was taught by our great pioneers.

London's New Officers

THE Annual Meeting, which was attended by nearly 50 members, got through its business in a happy and efficient way, thanks very largely to the preparatory work of Les Hilliard, and the human chairmanship of Reg. Gray. Dai Cousins takes over as Chairman, with Johnny Douglas as Vice-Chairman; Les Hilliard continues as District Secretary, with Will Jacobs coming back again into active Union harness as District Treasurer.

A. E. Nunn, who for so many years has closely collaborated with Dick Montford, quite appropriately succeeds him as Finance and Contribution Secretary. There are changes in the personnel of the Executive, without, I think, any loss of strength.

HOW TO DO IT—No. 4

A Party Treasurer's Job

By Coun. H. T. WILLCOCK, Secretary and Agent Southampton L.P.

There is surely no more important person in a local Labour Party than its Chancellor of the Exchequer, and an efficient Treasurer is, without doubt, a real treasure. To be ultra successful a treasurer needs to have the "tough guy" character of a Bevin, a touch of the disarming charm of a Dalton, the austerity outlook of a Cripps, plus the organising ability—where fund-raising is concerned—of a Morrison. Fortunately, within the ranks of our Party we have many such able members.

It is obvious that the person who is elected treasurer should become acquainted with one of the accepted forms of book-keeping, because book-keeping is merely a method of recording business transactions in such a way that from these records the responsible members may ascertain the financial position of a local Party, or Ward Association, or Women's Section, or any of its departments.

A good system of book-keeping should show the state of any account or of the expenses connected with a Party and should enable the treasurer to make up a statement at any time, showing the gain or loss involved, or determine the solvency or insolvency of the organisation almost at a glance.

In Southampton we have found that simplicity in account keeping is the hall-mark of success, for not only are we able to see the state of our finance instantly but when the auditors examine our books, receipts, etc., their task is a very easy one.

Banking System

Our avenues of income are many and varied; included are from membership contributions, affiliation fees, rent from property, revenue from our Party newspaper, income from draws, social activities, duplicating work, etc., etc., and to cope with this huge annual turnover we have but two banking accounts, a General Fund current account and a Parliamentary Fund deposit account, both, of course, with the C.W.S.

In order that our transactions shall be less complicated we pay every penny of income into the bank and discharge all payments by cheque, this ensures not only our own written records but the added check of monthly bank statements and the informative cheque counterfoils.

For cheques we appoint four signatories, including the Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary. This obviates delay in obtaining a signature should one of only two appointed signatories be not available. For day to day expenditure payment is made, when required, into the Secretary's petty cash box by a cheque drawn in favour of the Secretary and he keeps a petty cash book in addition to a postage account book; purchases of postage stamps being made from petty cash. Both books are "brought forward" weekly.

The Master Book

To simplify our larger transactions we have a number of account books. The master book is, of course, the thirteen analysis column ledger with income entries on the left-hand pages and expenditure on the right. All income and expenditure of every committee and department is entered in this master book, thus giving an overall survey of the Party's finances. More detailed accounting of each departmental activity is made in subsidiary day books—one book for each earning or/and spending committee.

For example, we have the "property day book," "newspaper day book," etc., etc., which in turn are also analysis books. These books contain every item of income and expenditure in an analysed form and are kept posted each day; in particular, we will take the Entertainments Committee day book.

This, on its income side, has five headed cash columns and a total column, the headings being Dances, Whist-drives, Bazaars, Outings, Sports and, on its expenses side, are six columns headed Halls, Bands, Adver-

tising, Printing, Prizes, Sundries, and, of course, a total cash column.

Before entries are analysed it is essential that the date, particulars and total are put down as soon as the transaction has occurred, as the actual analysis can be written in during a less busy moment.

With all this written information to hand it is a matter of seconds to ascertain with a brief addition how the money is coming in or going out with regard to the various forms of social activity we engage in.

Membership Contributions

Income from membership contributions we deal with in slightly different fashion at the central office because it is desirable that we have a record of every individual member's contribution. Contributions are paid in to the Central Office by Ward Membership Secretaries on the first Tuesday of the following month and an official receipt is given for all cash received. Paying-in forms with each member's name, ward number and address are brought with the money, and from these forms

details are entered in the office loose leaf ledger and the forms returned to the membership secretaries by post for the next month's contribution entries.

The forms allow for six months of entry—a white form for January to June and a pink one for July to December. The loose leaf form at the Centre has columns for arrears brought forward, shillings and pence columns for each month, a totals column and an arrears carried forward column with, of course, space for column totals at the foot of the page. By the way, in Southampton we have sixteen Ward Associations and give back 25 per cent. of contribution income to the Associations as rebate for their own domestic use.

It is impossible here to give a more detailed account of our book-keeping, but I would advise readers to obtain, if at all possible, numbers 247 to 252 of the "Labour Organiser," where an excellent series of articles dealing with account keeping for local Labour Parties were given.

Don't Trust to Memory

A few general words of advice may be appreciated, and from our experience we have come to the following important conclusions. Never attempt to trust to memory over money matters, but have the details entered in the proper place at the earliest possible moment.

It is extremely good business to have a specially printed Party receipt book with the Party's name, address, and Secretary or Treasurer, at the head, so constructed as to permit carbon counterfoils to be made with the initial entry. Not only does such a receipt appear official, but it has its propaganda value and avoids doubt as to what the income was for at a later stage. My Party has also had printed official reminders for amounts due, such as contributions not received, delayed affiliation fees, payment for work carried out at the Centre, etc., etc.

And above all, don't jot down financial transactions on odd pieces of paper, used envelopes or the backs of letters, but make use of business-like methods even should this mean a little initial expense in the purchase of books, specially printed receipts and the like.

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COLLECTING "SUBS"—3

Encourage the Women!

By W. McLINTOCK, Secretary and Agent, Norwich

Here are further comments on "subs" collecting in response to the recent article by H. W. Bellamy, of West Lewisham. It will be noted that both writers this month state that the payment of collectors (some of whom return their commission to the ward parties) is justified by results.

Like H. W. Bellamy, I agree that one of the most difficult positions to fill is that of "subs." collector, and I believe that this difficulty will be experienced in every constituency.

In Norwich we have been fortunate in having members who will undertake this task, although we could still accept a number more so that the task undertaken by the present collectors would be eased by an appreciable amount.

The Ward Committees themselves are responsible for the collection of contributions and they have a monthly call upon members for the purpose of keeping regular contact and as a systematic method of informing members of meetings, etc., that the ward may be organising.

We also allow a commission of twenty per cent. upon all contributions collected, although a number of the collectors return this sum to the Ward Secretary for the purpose of providing additional funds for the numerous activities undertaken by the Wards themselves. This scheme of giving a little in return for the service performed has been successful as will be seen from the Membership and Financial returns year by year. In 1946, after allowing for Ward Share and Commission, we received a nett sum of £322 14s. 10d. into this office, showing an increase of over £100 in cash, and 1,152 members.

No Additional Duties

I agree that the collectors should not have additional duties placed upon them. Our success last year was in no small measure due to avoiding this course, as far as was humanly possible, and preferable is the method adopted by the most successful of our Wards in their Executive Committee undertaking the canvass of electors and adding the already stated increase of members to the party. This method

is being adopted during the current year.

Our members' list is maintained in book form and the Wards pay contributions into this office monthly. There are columns for Ward Share, Commission and nett contributions to party. This is collated Quarterly and a compiled Analysis Book shows the Financial and Individual membership as well as Affiliated membership every Quarter.

Three Points

There are, in my opinion, some essentials that can go a long way to securing the success desired by all parties:—

- (1) *Regularity of Collection of Subscriptions.*
- (2) *Co-operation of Secretary, Agent and Ward Officials.*
- (3) *Encouragement to our Women members to take an active part in the general work of the Party, apart from Social Functions, and my experience is that they are excellent collectors.*

With reference to number 2, I would suggest periodical meetings between Ward Official and Secretary or Agent to discuss new proposals or the stepping up of present procedure in operation.

In my view this is most essential as it makes the working of the party smoother and allows members upon whom the actual work of the party has to depend the opportunity of viewing and discussing any matter that may arise and prevents misunderstanding and suggestions of fait accompli.

It also allows the Officer of the Party to have the feeling of his membership and avoid the many pitfalls that exist through decision being taken and then finding that the co-operation of the membership does not exist to put into operation decisions with benefit to the party.

Make It Simple

By Mrs. MABEL RAISIN, Secretary and Agent, East Lewisham Labour Party

There is no mystery about collecting subscriptions. There are just two essentials—method and persistence. I don't think it is very important as to precisely what "system" you adopt, so long as you have a recognised order about it.

Of course you must be methodical and you must make those who work with you in the field do their work methodically. That is just where you will have to be most persistent. It is easy to elaborate a scheme but it requires vastly more energy and enthusiasm to see that the scheme is properly carried out.

That is why I believe in making my collecting arrangements as simple as possible. I cut out everything that makes for complication or delay.

And I claim success. Last year our subscriptions reached the fine total of £932. This year the total will be a good deal more. The average annual subscription per member was 4/2 and as we increased our net membership during the year by 1,955 the true average is really very much higher. There are NO big subscribers. We don't want them, and have never sought them. The majority live on Council housing estates or in modest owner-occupied houses.

Commission Helps

We pay a commission to our collectors—or rather we provide for the payment of 33% and pay out, in fact, about 25% because some of our collectors return their commission. This payment of commission helps a great deal and is undoubtedly justified in the result. Yet it is not the secret of our success, if it is one element of success.

This is how we work:

First: I maintain a card index of the whole of the individual membership. This is kept strictly up to date with records of all payments. Each card covers four years. Cards are indexed under (1) Ward (2) Polling District and (3) street.

Second: I appoint (and remove) all Collectors. This is now done in collaboration with the Party Mem-

bership Officer. The cultivation of new collectors is a constant care of the Agent and the Membership Officer. All Collectors deal direct with the Party Office.

Third: Subscriptions are entered on to the card index from the Collectors' Books when they pay in, or within a very few days, and any information is at once carried from the book to the index card, and so on to the Ward Secretaries, or vice-versa.

Fourth: Receipts are issued from the Party receipt book to the collectors in respect of each payment.

20 Collectors

For our membership of 4,500 we have 20 Collectors, 13 men and 7 women.

That is really all the "system" there is.

There MUST be more to it? There is!

WE NEVER STOP THINKING ABOUT INCREASING OUR MEMBERSHIP.

WE NEVER STOP PLANNING FOR INCREASED MEMBERSHIP.

WE NEVER STOP CANVASSING FOR INCREASED MEMBERSHIP.

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An Effective Canvass

Guide to the "Stym" System

By W. J. STIMPSON, Secretary and Agent, Deptford

Here is an account of a canvass system which has proved highly effective in recent elections. Would it suit your Party? Comments on the plan are welcomed.

Methods of preparing a canvass; its conduct and effective recording, vary widely. There is, however, one thing which, in the main, is common to all, namely, that two or three *separate* clerical operations are required before a canvass ascertainment is finalised.

This involves quite considerable clerical work, and ties workers *inside* committee rooms instead of liberating them for *outside* work. Too often, in particular regard to the canvass, committee rooms have an air of bustle and bungle, without much real, effective work being done. Out of election experiences of this nature the method this article deals with, was evolved.

The Claim

From A to Z it is simple in preparation, and in day to day operation attains a satisfactory degree of efficiency in the basic requirements of canvass control. It eliminates many practices which I consider non-essential.

It reduces "labour-power" to the barest minimum. One or two persons can, with smoothness and despatch, control it through all the processes to the closing hours of polling day. In its operation it provides a constant *visual record* of canvass progress. There is no need to ask questions. The answer is *seen*!

Now, having "blown my trumpet," let me say that the system has been proven by election tests, and has not been faulted in any degree. Indeed, I am prepared to challenge its faulting in any major essential. I am convinced of its effectiveness, and in that spirit offer it to Parties, should they think it helpful to them.

What is Required

It is not going to be easy to clearly explain this on paper, but I'll do my

best. It would perhaps help if present, or recognised methods, are borne in mind, so that stage by stage, as the explanation is attempted, comparisons may be drawn. Here we go:

(A) You require millboard 30 in. by 20 in. Then rule it off at $9\frac{3}{4}$ in. —which will give you three lines across. You then down-rule at $5\frac{1}{4}$ in. from left edge, and thereafter at $1\frac{1}{4}$ in. This will then give you fifteen divisions across on each line, or forty-five divisions on the whole board. (Correctness of ruling is important, as it affects the subsequent lay-out of the canvass card.) Experiment with a ruling. It will help to simplify matters.

(B) Now take a foolscap envelope and cut it crosswise from corner to corner. This makes two holders, or bags. You next require some adhesive tape or paper, a strip of which you affix to the envelope edge, leaving a slight overhang.

The edge of the envelope is then placed against the down-ruled line, with its base on the cross-line, and the overhang strip of adhesive tape stuck down to the millboard. Repeating this process you have fifteen of these "envelope-bags" across each line. The "bags," being hinged to the millboard by the adhesive strip, can be moved about without danger to durability.

Now if I have managed to make "A" and "B" understandable, then you have got the main essential, and the rest is comparatively simple. So why not now try and make up a complete board!

The Canvass Card

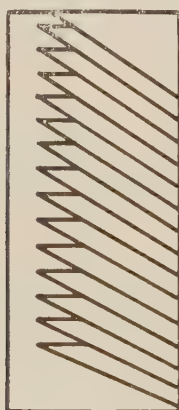
(C) Now for the canvass card. The one I use is 9 in. by $5\frac{1}{4}$ in. On the right-hand side of the card are the usual "F," "A," "D" columns, with

an additional column, the use of which I will refer to later. The back of the card is ruled in appropriate manner for removals information. A page of the register is pasted on to the card, which is then placed inside the "envelope-bag" on the millboard. The rulings and placings of envelopes are such that when all the cards are inserted—fifteen to a line, forty-five to a board—all that is visible are the four left-hand columns of the card. Each card will take on an average a page of sixty names. Fifteen cards to a line means 900 names, or 2,700 on a board. Adjustments to meet the size of a ward or polling district, or of any difference in the make-up of a register, can be made quite simply.

Blank Card (or Paper)

(D) You now want a blank card (or paper) the same size as the canvass card. Place this underneath the canvass card so that each envelope now holds two cards (or one card and one of paper).

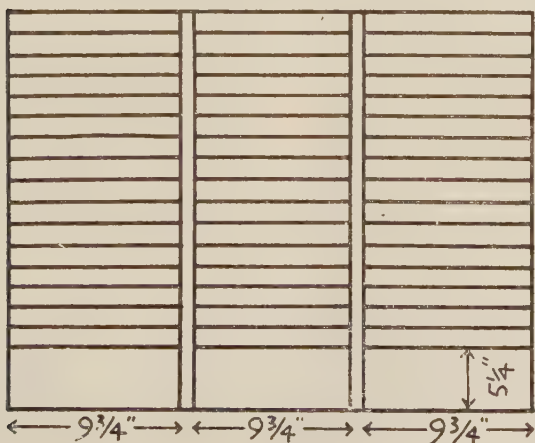
Now, whilst all this may sound a lot, and appear involved, a board can be prepared from start to finish within forty-five minutes. Let us assume you have a board ready, with a ward or polling district register pasted on to the cards. You then have in compact form, on a 30 in. by 20 in. millboard, the visual reminder of what there is to do, and it can rest tidily and safely on a small committee room table!



"ENVELOPE-BAGS"
PLACED ON BOARDS



CUT OF ENVELOPE
WITH STRIP OF
ADHESIVE
TAPE



RULING OF MILLBOARD

The Operation and Recording

The canvasser is given one of the cards. When taken out it leaves the blank card, or paper, still there. This blank card, or paper, provides the opportunity to record who has taken the canvass card. It does more; when the agent or chief clerk looks at the board, it tells them where the canvassing is taking place.

The canvass card is returned with its appropriate markings. Here is where the fourth column, mentioned earlier, comes in. The person in charge of the millboard *marks into this column a blue or red marking according to the canvass indication*, and as the canvass proceeds shades the colours down, and so, over the whole of the board (which means your polling district) patches of red and blue begin to appear.

Will you just pause for a moment and try to visualise this operation. It doesn't take long. What it does do is to automatically build up your wall-chart as the *canvass proceeds*. You don't need a wall-chart, of course. This is doing the job. Imagine your canvass half-way through. Your board is being proportionately coloured each day. Remember, your board has 45 cards, and all that you see are the 45 four-columned lines, the fourth of which is being shaded red and blue. There is your visual record.

Polling Day

Its use on Polling Day is, I feel sure, simpler and more effective than anything else I've had experience of. Out goes the canvass card for "calling-up." The white paper or card left underneath now not only records who has taken the card, but fulfills another function. Should "numbers" come in from the Polling Station whilst the canvass card is out, then they are jotted down on this card or paper, and

marked off on the canvass card when it is returned.

As the numbers come in from the polling station, they are marked off by extending the appropriate colour across through the registered number of the voter. Out goes the card again for call-up. Easy to be seen. No frantic sorting of cards back at the committee room with workers waiting.

I think this is all that need be said except to recapitulate—master the lay-out of the millboard, experiment and demonstrate with it yourself—and the method I have attempted to describe will unfold itself quite clearly and simply to you, and will also convince you as it has convinced me, of its effectiveness.

FOUR AGENTS APPOINTED

MR. JOHN M. DAVIS, aged 39, of Larbert, Stirlingshire, has been appointed Agent at Buckingham. He was formerly a general clerk in an ironfounders, and has been active in the Movement in Scotland.

MR. L. TAYLOR, agent at Saffron Walden, has been appointed Agent at Eccles. He is 31, and has been active in Westhoughton and elsewhere.

COUNCILLOR A. E. AMEY, aged 47, has been appointed Agent at South Battersea. He has been acting as agent in this constituency since May, 1945.

MR. A. E. OXBY, aged 41, of Sheffield, has been appointed Agent at Newcastle West. He has been a voluntary Party Officer over a considerable period and a Sheffield City Councillor.



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Choosing Municipal Candidates

How to Avoid Trouble

By A. L. WILLIAMS, Assistant National Agent

Disputes over the selection of municipal candidates are a frequent cause of trouble in local Labour Parties. Much of this trouble would be avoided if the compilation of the panel and the selection of candidates followed the correct procedure.

The rules of the Party give the general outline of the procedure that should be followed, but the details are left for the local organisations to decide. Usually, it is these details that cause the trouble.

For instance, take the simple matter of nomination for the panel. Some parties do not even provide a form on which the nominations should be made, and many of those that do fail to secure the information needed to determine whether or not the nominee is eligible and suitable to be a municipal candidate.

Nomination Form

At a minimum a completed nomination form should give the following information:

Names of the nominee;

Age;

Address;

Employment;

Trade Union and branch (if eligible);

Ward Party in which nominee holds

Individual Membership;

Length of Membership;

Name of nominating body, and signature and address of its Secretary;

A declaration signed by the nominee that he is able to give the time necessary if elected to the council, and that he accepts the Standing Orders and Rules of the Labour Council Group.

Some forms provide space for the nominee to give some details of his Labour and public activities.

All organisations affiliated to the local Labour Party as well as Party organisations, should be invited to nominate. The letter inviting nominations should indicate the general qualities required by nominees, and the importance of nominating only

those possessing such qualifications should be stressed.

Unsuitable People

The closing date for the return of nominations should be fixed to allow sufficient time for nominating bodies to give adequate consideration to the matter.

Unsuitable people often are placed on the panel because the local Executive Committee lacks the moral courage to recommend to the General Committee that their names should be excluded.

Some parties attempt to apply conditions for nomination that are contrary to the rules of the Labour Party. The rules do not permit the local imposition of an age limit, or of a qualifying period of individual membership.

A good Executive Committee will be bold enough to say that a particular nominee is not recommended for the panel because he is too old, or because he has had insufficient experience of the party, instead of attempting to disqualify him automatically by the application of unconstitutional conditions.

Before making their recommendations wise Executives interview the nominees who have not been on the panel previously. Some even subject the nominees to a test, but it is possible to carry this too far. Other qualities are needed in a candidate besides the ability to answer questions put by an examining committee.

Selection Meeting

If an Executive Committee has a reputation for fairness and for excluding personal factors when the interests of the party are at stake, its recommendations will be endorsed by the General Committee. Where Executive Committee recommendations are the subject of debate and amendment, not infrequently it is because the Executive has not always acted with complete objectivity and frankness.

Immediately after the panel has been endorsed, it should be circulated to the committees in those wards where it

has been agreed contests should take place. Once again the time factor is important. At least six weeks are needed to permit the ward committee to examine the panel and to arrange its selection conference.

A preliminary meeting of the ward should be held to reach agreement about the persons from the panel to be invited to appear before the selection conference. The local Labour Party secretary should be advised of the decision and of the details of the selection conference, so that he may arrange for the representation of the Executive Committee.

The rules provide for the selection of a local government candidate at a joint meeting of the ward and the Executive Committee. Some Executives do not exercise that right under

the rules, but are content to have one or two representatives at the selection to ensure that it is conducted in a proper manner.

It should not be forgotten that the selection meeting is a special one; it is wrong to accept new members, or to enrol affiliated members at that meeting.

Short speeches by each candidate followed by questions will enable the conference to decide on its choice. Voting should be by ballot, and candidates should be eliminated until one has received a complete majority of the total votes cast.

In the event of any dispute, the General Committee has the final decision, but attention to the elementary details outlined here will reduce disputes to a minimum.

School for Agents

As part of the training scheme for Agents, a Week-end School was arranged for a number of Study Course Students at Buscot Park, Faringdon, Berks., This proved an interesting experiment, as will be seen from the following report.

The number of Students was limited to the accommodation available at Buscot Park, and the accessibility of the Students.

The purpose of the School was to deal in a practical way with the problems confronting Agents in the Organisation and Conduct of Elections.

The Tutors were Mr. Harold Croft and Mr. John Pinkerton.

The Students and Tutors travelled down to Buscot by Coach, and enjoyed the journey through the pleasant countryside. This mode of travel, plus a break on the way for tea, provided an opportunity for all to get to know each other, so that on arrival the ice had been broken and there was a spirit of friendliness and comradeship already existing.

The facilities provided at the School were admirable in the extreme, and the miniature theatre in which we held the lectures, was superior to any university lecture theatre. The atmosphere and environment was therefore

conducive to good work and clear thinking.

Agent's Approach

Mr. Croft opened the School with an introductory talk on "The Agent's approach to the technique of party organisation" and dealt in a practical way with the question and the Agent's attitude to organisation. He elaborated on the need for competency and for an understanding of the requisite preparation for the business meetings of parties, of the use of rules as an aid to organisation, and illustrated to the Students that the three basic elements of good organisation were method, zeal and persistence. He discussed the techniques of organisation under four heads:

- (1) Formal, (2) Objective, (3) Statistical,
- (4) Psychological

and showed how each could be used to advantage in any party.

John Pinkerton followed in the second session and outlined the functions of Local Parties and Sections in respect to publicity and expansion of

Labour support. He dealt fully with the problem of recording membership, contributions and electorate and of the vital necessity for such records to give information on manpower at such times as elections, special and membership campaigns. He also dealt with propaganda as a means of extending support and gave concrete suggestions for campaigns both in the spoken and written word.

The Sunday morning lecture was devoted to the specific aspects of the Conduct of Elections and particular attention was given to the question of Nomination, Poll, Count, Return of Election Expenses, and Corrupt and Illegal Practices. It is found that these aspects contain many pitfalls for the Agent or person in control of elections and the Tutors were able to clarify the many legal provisions relating thereto for the benefit of the Students.

In the afternoon the Tutors dealt with Case Law on the numerous legal queries dealt with in Head Office. Sweepstakes and Draws were discussed and the provisions thereon in the Betting and Lotteries Acts. Trespass to property in flyposting, Libel in election addresses and news-sheets, Public Nuisance by use of Loudspeaker Cars and responsibility of Parties in respect of tenancy agreements of party premises.

The standard of questions and dis-

cussion was excellent and it was very evident that the Students were keen to improve their knowledge on all the subjects.

Of Great Value

To round off the sessions, the Students held a forum on the Sunday evening, in which they themselves opened and carried on the whole of the discussion, which ranged over a fairly wide field and included a valuable discussion on the production and distribution of local news-sheets.

The School proved conclusively that the bringing together of key workers in this manner is of inestimable value. Apart from the knowledge gained by each individual, the association of the School had removed their feeling of isolation in constituency work, and had encouraged them to feel a confidence for the future in approaching problems which they now realised were common, if different in degree, in all constituencies.

Head Office is endeavouring to arrange further Schools of this nature in other parts of the country. The Group course on Party Organisation in the last week of the Summer School at Glan y Mor, Barry, South Wales, September 27th to October 4th (see page) will be run on similar lines to the one at Buscot Park, but will be more extensive in its range, and will appeal and be of special interest to all Students of Head Office Study Course.

PROFILE BY JACK CUTTER

No. 10. A. J. McWHINNIE

Very Special Correspondent

This apparently inexhaustible series of near-libels of my workmates is being interrupted this month because the unexpected and very welcome appearance of my old friend, A.

J. McWhinnie, as a contributor to these columns in last month's issue, has reminded me of many an historic by-election made enjoyable by his stimulating company.

Of course, each by-election seems historic to those responsible for the conduct of the contest. They are con-

vinced that upon the success of their efforts depends the fate of the British people. The whole world is awaiting the result in strained and anxious suspense.

Repercussions will either shatter the foundations or raise the roof of either the Kremlin or the White House, or both. The Government of the day will be (a) "immeasurably fortified," or (b) "irretrievably weakened" (according to taste) and altogether the whole show is rather important.

About a fortnight before polling day the national newspapers supporting



A. J. McWhinnie

conduct of the contest. They are con-

one's candidate send a special correspondent down to the constituency, and on nomination day, those which oppose him follow suit. All make a beeline for the most comfortable hotel in the place, secure the best rooms therein, and at once make another beeline for your H.Q.

Tracing you with the unerring instinct which has made them special correspondents, they proceed to cross-question you on the details of the campaign with that unshakeable assumption that their arrival is the most important event in the contest to date, which, if you are wise, you will be inclined to encourage rather than resist.

A. J. McWhinnie, however, has a technique of his own. - He arrives about three weeks before the poll and his arrival is in itself an event, for it is a sign that he sees the probability of plenty of "colour" in the contest, and at least one good story a day for the "Daily Herald."

Thus I always regard it as a good portent if, early in the campaign, he rings me up to say: "Look, O' boy, I'm coming down on Tuesday. When can I see you?"

I know that from Tuesday onwards, there is going to be no lack of publicity in that contest; that it will be good publicity, and that, so long as Mac's around there's going to be never a dull moment.

His name is from Northern Ireland, and his accent has a flavour of Liverpool, but don't let either fool you. He is the personification of the popular idea of the Fleet Street newspaperman—wise-cracking, sophisticated, hard-boiled and apparently casual.

Those "Handlebars"

And don't let that fool you either. Like his outrageous handlebar moustache, they are "all part of the act, O' boy." When Mac is on the job, only one thing matters to him, and that is his story for that day. He devotes himself to that story with a singleness of purpose and concentration of attention I have never seen equalled by any other journalist.

If it is a good, "easy" story which writes itself early in the day (and the

best stories come easily and write themselves, he will not put it over the line at once, but will spend the rest of the day dissecting it, cutting a line here to add a line there, improving a term of phrase, selecting, examining, discarding or accepting an alternative adjective until zero hour arrives.

Then he shuts himself up in the nearest 'phone-box for half an hour's strange conversation with some never-seen, but highly technical colleague in Long Acre, who, to judge by the frequent adjectives and caustic comments percolating from the 'phone-box is stone deaf, abstruse and suspicious of all words with more than one syllable.

I have had the pleasure of working with Mac in many a hectic by-election, and every one of his stories has been a good one. They have been good as journalistic efforts, for Mac is a first-class journalist, but they have also been helpful to the Labour Party, the Labour candidate and the Labour agent.

"Herald's" Support

He makes no secret of the subject of his story of the day. He will consult the agent about it as soon as he has decided on the idea. If the agent can advance a reasoned case against the idea, he will at once discard it and produce a better one. His knowledge and understanding of the Party are such that he seldom has had to discard his original idea.

The "Daily Herald," always faithful, always reliable in its steadfast and consistent support of the Party's policy and its conference decisions, has been a good friend in all weathers.

Not the least of its many services has been its whole-hearted support in by-elections and A. J. McWhinnie's contributions in this special service have been consistently excellent and arrestingly zestful. Mac's present "line" of "presenting the Party to the Party" is not the easiest kind of journalistic job by a long way, but, like the good journalist he is, he is making a job of it.

We feel he is one of the team, and we welcome him for his shrewd assessment of Party mechanics as much as for his irrepressible good fellowship.

MEMBERSHIP FIGURES

Luton Leads the Field

By COLIN MACPHEE

WHICH is our biggest D.L.P.? Raymond Blackburn, King's Norton's livewire M.P., claimed the title for his own party in the course of a recent speech in the Commons.

Well, as it happens he was wrong, but he was not so very far out. King's Norton, in fact, comes fifth.

Pride of place goes to Luton, with a grand total of 5,085 individual members. It has "upped" its membership by 867 during the past year.

Runners-up

RUNNING Luton close are East Lewisham and Nelson and Colne, each with 5,000 members apiece. East Lewisham has done particularly well in recruiting; it has increased its membership by no less than 1,955 during the year.

Next comes South Salford with 3,608, an increase of 1,504. King's Norton is fifth with 3,571 members, as against 1,824 a year ago, thus practically doubling its membership.

The other parties in the "Top Ten" of D.L.P.s are South Croydon (3,525); Hornchurch (3,442); Widnes (3,311); Kingston-on-Thames (3,271); Farnworth (3,259).

This "Top Ten" table, of course, excludes the two-constituency parties such as Woolwich (6,240); Norwich (4,152); Oldham (4,020); Ilford (3,642), and Stockport (3,516).

Other single-constituency parties who are treading on the heels of the leaders are Stroud (3,213); Carnarvon (3,118); Lanark (3,099); Stretford (3,092), and Dartford (3,059).

Some Pointers

THIS welter of figures should give much scope for our tame statisticians and analysts. Meantime some pointers seem to emerge. It is almost an All-England table. Only one Scottish and one Welsh party get into the first fifteen (Lanark and Carnarvon). It would appear, too, that the South of England is doing better than the North.

Also noteworthy is the success of the "dormitory" parties. East Lewisham, South Croydon, Kingston-on-Thames, Dartford, Hornchurch—all come into this category. Kingston's record is particularly meritorious, as the constituency is still held by the Tories.

The "rurals," too, are doing well. To attract such big memberships in scattered divisions like Stroud, Carnarvon and Lanark is a grand job of work.

Oxford's Revival

UNIVERSITY politics don't always reflect current trends outside. Thus we had Oxford's famous "We Won't Fight for King or Country" resolution at a time when the "National" Government was firmly in the saddle.

Now, in a period of Labour dominance, students in some Universities seem to have swung to the Right.

It would appear, however, that is but a temporary phase and there are signs of a big Labour revival at Oxford. Ben Roberts, secretary of the Oxford University Labour Club, tells me that over 500 members have joined this term. Their campaign included the distribution of a recruiting leaflet among all the students in residence at Oxford.

Incidentally, D.L.P.s in University towns would do well to maintain close contact with the Labour student organisations.

The new National Association of Labour Students, which has been formed with the blessing of the N.E.C., is making headway in various Universities and many of their members are only too anxious to assist D.L.P.s in any way they can.

There are now Labour clubs in being at Oxford, Cambridge, London School of Economics, Glasgow, Manchester, Durham, Hull, Reading, and training colleges at Stafford and Nottingham. Clubs are in process of being formed in about a dozen other centres.

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Is this Councillor Qualified?

By JOHN PINKERTON

QUERY: *An Opposition Councillor has moved out of the district and is still sitting as a Councillor. Is he qualified or should he be called upon to resign and the seat declared vacant?*

ANSWER: It is impossible to give a categorical yes or no to the enquirer, one must use the phrase of Dr. Joad and say "it depends" whether the Councillor in question has one of the other qualifications which entitles him to sit.

There are three such qualifications, any one of which entitles a person to be elected and be a member of a local authority (provided he is of full age, a British subject, and not disqualified under any other enactment) Sec. 57 L.G.A. 1933.

- (a) he is a local government elector for the area of the local authority, or
- (b) he owns freehold or leasehold land within the area, or
- (c) he has, during the whole of the twelve months preceding the day of election, resided in the area,
- (d) In the case of a member of a parish council, he has during

the whole of the twelve months preceding the day of election or since March 25 in the year preceding the year of election, resided either in the area or within three miles thereof.

NOTE: (Land is held to include buildings on the land. The owner or lessee of a house or flat is apparently a constructive "owner" of the land in law.)

It will be seen from the above that although a councillor has removed from the area, he may still qualify by the owning or renting of a house, shop or flat, or piece of land in the area.

It is not always easy to prove that he does not own or rent any of these, but it is advisable to find out before taking any action.

If he does not own or rent land and is qualified by being a local government elector (a) he remains qualified and can sit until his name is taken off the register, if, however, he had resided in the area for the whole of the twelve months preceding the day of election (c) he is entitled to remain a councillor for the whole of his three-year period irrespective of whether his name is on the register or not.

READERS' FORUM

Why Wards Get "Browned Off"

With reference to W. Sers's article in the May "Organiser" (A plan to revive 'em), I agree that in many local parties too much time is spent in theorising and not enough in action. The place where a divisional party is built is in the wards, and in many instances there does not seem to be that cohesion of action between the divisional executive and the wards, that is so desirable.

Ward organisations are often allowed to fall into decay for want of support and encouragement from the Central body. I know of instances where resolutions from wards have been passed to the divisional party Executive, who in turn, have passed them on to the Labour Group on the local council, who again leave it to committee chairmen, so that a lag of up to four months is

common. In the face of this even the most enthusiastic ward members get tired of waiting.

This sense of frustration is then reflected in attendance at ward meetings and eventually in your membership.

Mr. Sers's attitude to discussion groups I find difficult to understand, as the very fact that a person has joined the Labour Party does not make him a good Socialist.

This thirst for knowledge has got to be satisfied or you will soon lose your member again, and what better instrument than the discussion group to satisfy this desire.

H. D. DAVIS.

Smethwick Trades and
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